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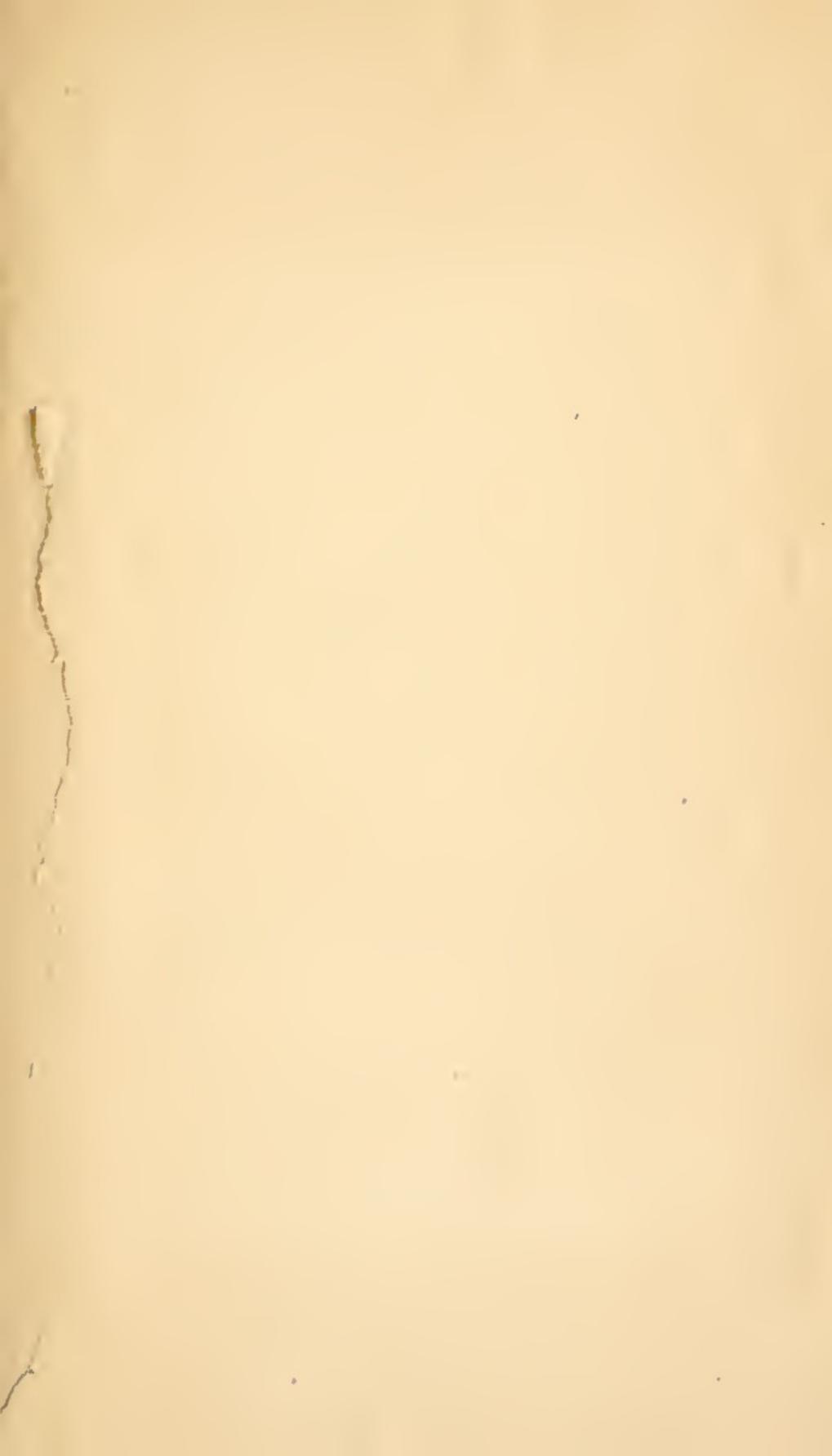
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To Jessie,
from
George A. Soule.

21st Dec., 1885.

A



POEMS BY MAUDÉ E. HINE.

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POEMS

BY

MAUDE EGERTON HINE.

Published when she was 18.



PRIVately PRINTED.

1885.

CHISWICK PRESS:—C. WHITTINGHAM AND CO., TOOKS COURT,
CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

PR
4790
H28A17
1885

GRATEFULLY AND REVERENTLY

dedicated

TO MY MASTER,

DR. G. G. ZERFFI.

91667

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INTRODUCTION.



OOK kindly on the first few pages here,
For flowers are they, though weed-like oft
and wild :

In her eighth summer, did they first appear
In the thought-garden of a little child
Your pardon then for faults that many are
In ditties, sung so very long ago
By one to whom the whole of life looked fair,
Who only thought as little children do
That are so very free of worldly sin and woe.

What think you of the ditties later sung ?
Is it a wiser, sweeter voice that sings ?
“ Alack ! ” you say, “ the singer still is young,
Nor hath she wholly put off childish things !
Shall such a one as this, a puny child
Strive foolishly to fill a giant’s place ? ”
Not so ; to hope so much were wrong and wild ;
But what I know, I’ll tell in life’s short space
As best I can, and leave the rest to God’s dear grace.

And, not so old am I, but time there is
In the long future, that I yet may claim
Your hearing, for far worthier songs I wis,
With deeper earnest fraught, and nobler aim.
And God me helping, through their riper grace,
The heart-beats of that child of yesterday
Who sang about the daisies, ye shall trace.
So of your courtesy, fair friends, I pray
You hold me in kind memory until that day.



THE THOUGHTS OF A CHILD.

I.

THE DAISY AND THE FERN.

HE day was hot, the sun shone out
And burned the little flowers,
Who earthward drooped their weary heads
And longed for cooling showers.

One little daisy, hot and tired
And scorching in the sun,
Had altered much, for fair was she
When the morning had begun.

“ Come, put yourself beneath my shade ! ”
A graceful fern thus spake ;
“ For if you stay out there, dear flower,
You’ll shrivel up and bake.”

So daisy leaned towards the fern
And hid beneath her shade,
And on the fern’s cool mossy root
Her burning petals laid.

No sunlight fell on her, but, oh !
The poor fern had it all ;
She drooped down low, and lower still,
Who once was straight and tall.

“Daisy,” she said, “I’m dying fast,
My life is near its end,
My time with you is almost past,
So farewell, little friend.”

Then daisy wept, her tears ran down
Upon the poor fern’s root ;
A thrill of fast returning life
Through the languid fern did shoot !

Full soon she grew quite fresh again,
No longer did she burn ;
For little daisy’s tears of love
Had saved the dying fern.



II.

NATURE'S CARE.



RE Nature seeks to take her rest,
She points the sun towards the West,
And shows the weary bird its nest,
That they may sleep.

She bids the flower with leaves unrolled
Its dainty petals closely fold,
That, sheltered from the night-wind cold,
It safely sleep.

She croons a soothing lullaby
In the breeze that whispers by ;
And with that dreaming wailing cry
Sends all to sleep.

And when we well this earth have trod,
Nature gives our souls to God,
And lays us gently 'neath the sod,
Awhile to sleep.

III.

THE FLOWERS' ELECTION.

 N election is now being held,
For the flowers are all mad for a queen ;
The “speeching” and voting go on,
And cause a most terrible scene.

One tulip, a smart little flirt,
Screams loudly and long for the rose ;
But a wee giddy columbine bud
Does flippantly interpose.

Nextly, a cauliflower speaks,
For his cousin the cabbage he votes ;
At which e'en a butterfly grins
As onwards he lazily floats.

A full-blown and strong-minded flower
Votes loud for republic—and peace !
Or else for a strawberry plant,
Who's her grandmother's brother's aunt's niece.

Next marigold speaks to the crowd,
Who is known to be forward and pert,
But a nettle makes stinging remarks
Till the speaker declares himself hurt !

And then to rampage they begin ;
Sweet William is scragging a rose ;
Sweet-pea in a neighbourly way
Is pulling young marigold's nose !

Such a noise and confusion ensues
That a snail faints away on the wall ;
And never as yet have I heard
What the end of it was, after all !



IV.

THE CATHEDRAL IN THE WOOD.



NCE was I walking on a heath,
At idle dreaming pace,
And came upon a shady wood,
A very silent place.

High fir-trees twined their mighty arms
In arches overhead ;
And cool and soft was that sweet moss
That on the ground was spread.

The nightingale's pure notes were psalms ;
And, as I listened there,
And heard the whisper of the wind,
I fancied it was prayer.

A feeling as of utter peace
Came stealing o'er my soul,
That kissed my every grief away,
And every wound made whole.

And now when sorrow comes to me
I wish that I were there,
To feel again that strange relief
In God's own House of Prayer.



V.

IVANHOE.

FTER the tasks of the day are done,
Away to some chamber all alone
I creep, and there in armchair curled,
Forget the humdrum every-day world,

And take from the shelf one well-loved book,
Which, though it has rather a tattered look,
Is yet very precious, for you must know
It is my favourite, "Ivanhoe."

My lessons and work must take their chance
When once I get into my world of romance,
Forgetting there is such a time as "Now,"
Only dreaming of wonderful "Long Ago."

First, great King Richard comes riding by
And thrills my heart with his battle-cry ;
And close to his side is Ivanhoe,
With knights and esquires of the time "long ago."

Again the tinkling of bells I hear,
As Wamba the fool cracks his jokes in my ear ;
And Rebecca the Jewess I see arise,
With her coal-black hair and her love-lorn eyes.

I see the knight with his lance in rest,
And the foam that is white on his horse's breast ;
The combatants' war-cries, the blows on the helm
Came echoing back from that "long ago" realm.

And although I have read it nigh twenty times,
Still fresh are its characters, doings, and rhymes,
And I dream in my sleep of the time "long ago,"
And bless the great author of "Ivanhoe !"



VI.



MUSIC.

T begins like the leaves of an opening bud,
And grows to a widespread flower ;
Then tenderly trembles, as hangs on a leaf
A raindrop, after a shower.

Then wildly it soars in the flight of the lark,
Till the notes are heard from afar ;
And in maddening sweetness it rushes and swells,
Then drops as a falling star.

It gently droops as a fading flower,
Or the dying glow in the West ;
Then falls away with the peaceful cry
Of a heart that has found a rest.



VII.

THE WRECK OF THE "FAVOURITE."

ANCING merrily over the waves,
Spreading her sails to the breeze,
As the sun came up in the early morn,
The "Favourite" skimmed o'er the seas.
There were two good fishers within the boat,
And each one sang with a merry note.

Their hearts were light and their nets were strong,
And the sun shone out on high,
While sea-gulls flapped their silver wings,
And the lark sang in the sky.
The "Favourite" was soon far out on the sea,
And no little boat sped faster than she.

But soon it changed, the sky grew dark,
And threatening clouds arose ;
And children thought of their fathers at sea,
Saying, " Hark ! how the cruel wind blows !" "
They were anxious at sea, at home still more,
And longing eyes looked forth from the shore.

The sun was sinking into the sea,
And in came the fisher-boats ;
The nightingale in the far-off wood
Was singing her farewell notes,
When, alas ! on a rock on the beach were cast
A tattered sail and a broken mast !

They told a tale, and a woeful tale,
For the fishers ne'er came home,
Though the children lingered upon the beach
And thought that they still would come.
There were too more bodies 'neath the waves' wild
beat,
And two more souls at the Judgment Seat.



VIII.

ELFLAND.

UST between Nowhere and Somewhere else,

Higher than bird can fly,
Somewhere exceedingly near the moon
(And some say twice as high),
There is the home of the dear little elves,
Who live in a place as sweet as themselves.

Some are employed in mending the moon
With odd chips off some star ;
Others in catching runaway clouds
Floating away too far.
And when the time comes for the sun to rise
They push him up into the Eastern skies.

Some there are polishing dewdrops bright,
Some teaching birds to sing,
And others who help the fledgeling small
To use his tiny wing ;
And some little mischievous elves there are
Who chase through the sky each shooting star.

Sliding down moonbeams at dead of night,
Silently one by one,
They do their good little deeds on earth ;
But when they see the sun,
Their magic is over, and they must fly
Up his first beam, to their home in the sky.

When good little children are fast asleep,
By elf-wings their dreams are fanned
Through the myriad twinklings of diamond stars
Up into Fairyland ;
And the cloud will soon pass from the naughty
child's face
If you tell him a tale of this Lilliput race !

Oh, elves ! if indeed you exist,
Come down from your land of day,
Come down to this place where all is work,
And hardly any play !
Oh, elves ! when I hear of your land of mirth,
I wish that your Elfland were here on earth !



IX.

SPRING.

OW comes young Spring ; the buds upon
the trees
Burst forth, saluting Life, from their dark
homes,
And crocuses, unfolding, kiss the breeze
For very joy that merry Spring now comes.
And little violets, sleeping 'neath their leaves,
Open their eyes in time to greet their queen,
While ruddy Sol on Winter hotly breathes ;
The snow is melting, and no more is seen.
The little stream, once like a crystal sheet,
Runs burdened with the shrivelled leaves as boats,
And whilst he hurries with his fairy fleet,
Fills the glad air with little laughing notes.
And birds in their snug nests in chorus sing
And praise their God, who made the joyous Spring.



X.

THE RAINBOW.



OD, on His throne hath smiled, with a smile
That is set like a wreath on the brow of
the Heaven ;
Binding the Earth to the dome of the sky
As the sign of a Promise which He hath given.

See, how it climbeth up out of the cloud
Till it clothes with its beauty the heaven's vast
bosom ;
For the Pledge which our Father hath given to
Earth
Hath sunned all the flowers of the sky into blossom !



XI.

THE FROST-ELF AND THE SUN.

HE sunlight was fading, the day was nigh done,
And down from his throne stepped the glorious sun ;
The chilly wind whistled and laughed in his glee
As he snapped off the firstling of flow'ret and tree.

The little frost-spirit came laughing with spite,
“What care I, what care I, old Sun, for your light ?”
And he froze the blithe stream and he nipped the new leaf,
And the snow-drops who hung their pale faces in grief.

But lo ! in the morning, uprose Sol the Sun,
And smiled in the face of the day just begun.
He kissed the bright streamlet, which rippled again,
And the frost-elf might nip as he liked, but in vain.

The flowers smiled up to the warm rosy light,
And that little frost-spirit, he cried for sheer spite ;
For foolish he felt now his power was gone,
And weeping, he hid from the great smiling Sun !



XII.

THE SONG OF THE WIND.



WHISPER amid the feathery grass,
And dimple the rivulet as I pass,
On the flower-starred field, on the sun-lit
hill,
Fetterless, joyful, I roam at my will.

And oft in a headlong hurrying chase,
I drive the clouds through the azure space ;
Then dropping, I laugh 'mid the gathered sheaves,
Or whirl in a dance with the fallen leaves.

O'er the hoary old ocean a master am I,
As I mockingly hurl his wild waves on high ;
And the floundering ships on the rocks I break,
Then turning, I laugh at the havoc I make !

I howl 'mid the pine-trees in darkness of night,
And I bend them and break, in my tyrannous might
Through the smoke-begrimed city I rush on my way
Till again in the corn-fields and valleys I play.

Through the churchyard in silence I wond'ringly
pass,
And scarce care to linger, or play with the grass ;
But I droop, as I sobbingly hold in my breath,
And for once am subdued, in the presence of Death.

I tremblingly whisper around the old Church,
And wail in the ivy-leaves over the porch ;
Then entering softly, I hush to a sigh . . .
For a Spirit is there, who is greater than I.



LATER POEMS.

A DAWN.



LOOKED upon the grass at morn,
And spied the daisy, growing low,
Unfolding each dear bud of snow
To greet the fair day, newly born.

I saw a thing I loved full well,
A young laburnum brightly hung,
As if the sunbeams there had clung
By golden fingers, when they fell.

I spied the dew-drop on a blade,
A sunbeam smiling in its heart,
And watched the first glad lark depart
And soaring into Heaven fade.

I heard its ecstasy of song,
That fell upon my heart like dew,
That seemed to ring against the blue,
And lost itself the clouds among.

The earth and I were young and gay,
And I had yet to live and love ;—
Nor knew I that fair dawn might prove
The herald of a darker day.



THE CONSCIENCE WHISPER ; OR, THE SUNBEAM.

 T came to a grand court-lady,
Who was robing herself for the ball ;
“What a nuisance !” she said, “is the
sunshine,
I do not like it at all,

For it shows where your face is painted.
When by gaslight paint looks like your skin !”
So the sunbeam fled from the lady,
For she would not take it in.

It entered a clergyman’s study,
And it rested upon his pen.
“This sunbeam,” he said, “is a worry ;
Why comes it into my den ?

“ ’Tis a small mistake it rests on,
But if I should take it out,
It would contradict most flatly
What on Sunday I preached about !

“The people,—they know no better,
As I spoke it, must it remain !”
So the sunbeam left the indifferent heart,
Where hope of entrance was vain.

It fled to the prisoners’ dungeon,
And lay on the weary head ;
It showed up his grievous sin-stains,
And shame, that had long been dead

Woke up in his lonely bosom,
And he wept ’neath his load of sin :
So the hardened sinner was softened,
And took the sunbeam in.



RIGHT AND WRONG.

(A STORY OF ALL TIME.)



HE Knight goes forth to the field of fight
To crush a hideous wrong ;
With heart thrice strong with the sense
of right
He leads the armèd throng.

* * * *

The fight is fought, the right has won !
But the leader, where is he ?
Who strove so long, and fought so hard,
To set the wronged ones free !

They're rejoicing at the conquest,
But he lies upon the sod,
Forgot by those he righted,
With his face upturn'd to God !



A REQUIEM.

 E has lived his life and is sleeping ;
 Let him rest, on his Father's breast ;
 For Death hath banished the bitter past,
 Hath healed the wounded soul at last,
 And hath laid him in God's good keeping.
 Let him rest.

He hath gone to the King of high Heaven
 Nor weepeth, but quiet sleepeth ;
 Into that harbour driven
 As a ship by a tempest of grief,
 He hath found there the needful relief
 That a well pleasèd Father hath given.
 Let him rest.

For once that great heart was aching,
 Though no word of complaint was heard,
 But silently, self-forsaking,
 He friended the world in its joyless parts,
 Showing nought, as he bound the bleeding hearts,
 Of the grief that his own was breaking.
 Let him rest.

Till thou, dear Christ, didst relieve him
Whose own life with sorrow was rife !
No more can the old pain grieve him,
For hushed is his strong heart's aching
In a sleep that heralds glad waking ;
Lord God, of Thy mercy receive him !

Let him rest.



TO MY VALENTINE.



WILD rose dewy in the morn
Is a thing of tender grace,
But it would droop and die before
The sweetness of thy face.

The shining of a golden sun
Is wonderful to see,
But I can scarce be dazzled, since
Mine eyes have gazed on thee.

Most tender flowers do deck the earth,
And silver stars above ;
I see they're fair,—but not so rare
As the Lady o' my Love !



IN THE FACTORY.

[This poem was suggested by a notice which appeared in one of the papers a few years ago, the gist of which was, that in consequence of the great demand for foreign materials, the Bradford looms were standing still and the people starving.]

 HERE is quiet in the place, and the silent
 looms
Stand useless and grim in the empty rooms ;
But the hush of the quiet with trouble is rife
For the people who wearily wait without ;
Their rest means starving, their work means life.

Their faces are hopeless, their clothing is torn,
And the heart of the bravest is bruised and forlorn,
For these hundreds here starve by one foolish whim,
For Fashion and Folly of Riches born
Have crushed the people, and made them mourn !

They pray in their need for the smallest task,
And see—at the answer to what they ask,
The desperate tears *will* gain their way,
Though never a sob may be heard aloud !
Then they push back through the silent crowd.

* * * * *

There is quiet in the place, and the silent looms
Stand useless and grim in the empty rooms ;
And the people without may wait and starve,
Their hearts may weary, their hearts may ache
Their hearts may madden until they break !
For Fashion has willed it *shall* be so,
And Fashion rules fools, and fools abound
On too many breadths of English ground !
Let them look to the horror that they have wrought,
The sin and the heart-ache, by lack of thought,
And then just for once let Fashion go,
For Fashion weighs lighter than human woe ;
—O shame ! to be told of a civilized age
Counted as Christian, counted as sage,
That it left the toilers that clothe the land
To read their doom from a fashion-page !



*LOOKING BACK.*

LET me gently raise the curtain,
Gazing for a little space
On the golden time of childhood,
Sacred in its tender grace.

Lo ! a field first-daisy dotted
In the freshness of the spring
And a child a-laughing, singing,
All for joy of everything.

Such a time for sweet believing,
Such a time for lovely faith,
When the pure young heart unfearing
Saw its God, beyond its Death !

Then, to me, was every rainbow
Arching up the dome above,
Half a mystic ring of beauty
Wedding Earth to God's great love.

Heart, scarce lower than an angel,
Thou wert higher than a man,
While thy happy stream of childhood
'Neath the sun of Truth still ran !

* * * * *

There,—then gently drop the curtain
I have seen enough to know
What a grace I fell away from
In the time 'twixt then and now !

Reproach hath never gazed before
With such sweet sternness on my face,
It shall not have come for nothing,
If *Thou* help me, God of grace !



"JO."

'VE played the poor orphan, I've bullied
and whined
In the cold, and the wind, and the wet ;
An' I've lied like a nigger this whole blessèd day,
An' I ain't earnt a 'alfpenny yet !

First a clergyman comes, and I says to myself,
" Here's a customer, sure, as 'll pay "—
He was thinking of next Sunday's sermon, I s'pose,
For he chivied me out of his way.

Then comes a fine lady as carried a dawg
As was petted and fed like a saint ;
(Ah—there's many a man as is left for to starve
An' there's many a dawg as ain't !)

An' I sez to the lady, I sez, sez I,
All a shiverin' and chatterin' with cold,
" My father's jist dead, an' mother is lef'
With but me, an' a gal two years old."

(For yer see it comes easy to lie in that way,
 When you've learnt it ever since yer was young)
 But the lady passed by, with her fat little dawg,
 An' her foot-boy, he put out his tongue.

So yer see, I felt hopeless ; so hungry and queer
 An' tremblin', I 'ardly could stand,
 An' it seemed as my broom 'ad grew 'eavier much,
 An' was gettin' too big for my 'and ;

When I see a old lady, as looked very good,
 An' could pity a bit of a chap
 As was 'ungry and little and dirty and poor,
 An' would give me a penny, mayhap.

| But she gave me two tracts, about brimstone and that,
 An' one were called "Sinner, do Right!"
 | But they made my heart 'eavier much than before,
 An' my stomach they lef' jist as light.

Ah me—I *was* wretched and wished I was dead,
 An' *wished* I was dead in the cold !
 An' if you'll believe me (for I *can* tell a truth)
 Down I goes in the mud, and I 'owled.

An' I 'owled and I 'owled till I fell fast asleep,
 An' nobody noticed—not one,
 'Cep the pleeceman, who stirred up my bones with
 his boot,
 An' angrily chivied me on.

Blunderin' and stumblin' I crawls on again,
In the face of the wind and the sleet,
Till more dead than alive, into someone I walks,
An' fell in a 'eap at his feet.

'Twas a navvy : he hoisted me up in his arms,
As kind as a hangel could be,
An' out comes my story without any lies,
For I were *too* wretched yer see !

"Oh, give me some bread, sir ! Oh ! give me some
bread,
For I *know* I shall die if yer don't,
An' I give you my word that I'm not lying now,
An' if you will hear me, I won't.

I stands at my crossin' from mornin' till night,
An' I begs of the coves as go by ;
An' I lies, sir, I lies like the devil hisself,
If not, they won't listen, that's why.

You say I'm a wery small chap to be here ?
Ay,—I've never a friend 'cept my broom,
For I've no pertikler parents, sir,
Nor yet no pertikler 'ome."

Then he carries me straight to a 'orspital place,
(An' that's where I'm stayin' jist now ;)
Which is jist like a palace, so warm and so rich,
And away from the dirt and the row.

An' a young doctor comes to me every day,
As gentle as ever I see,
An' sometimes the navvy, he comes with him too,
A-bringin' a present for me.

An' they look, and they whisper, the nurses an' all,
An' one told me (my ! didn't she cry ?)
That I'm going to Heaven ;—ain't it almost *too*
grand
For a pore little shaver like I ?





THE HERMIT'S STORY.



HERE are some men born with a godly heart,
Who from their birth to death do work no sin,
Who fear their God, nor from His word depart,
Nor love the world, nor that which is therein.

And yet I hold it nobler far than this
When men, who once have wrought most grievous wrong,
Conquer their hearts by prayer, and earnest thought
Turn unto Christ, and in His love are strong.

For to be good where no temptations are
Is nought, but when a creature hath to rise
Out of a lower self, and cast afar
The snaky sin,—God knows the sacrifice !

* * * * *

And I was once a baron of the land
(A lone and agèd hermit now am I),
My soul was fierce, and bloody was my hand,
Shut were mine ears to poverty's sad cry.

Many have trembled when they heard my name,
For I made laws to suit my every mood ;
I ne'er forgave, but sought to write my fame
Upon the great world-history, in blood.

Now once in fight, a sorry hurt had I
Ay,—nigh I fainted for such loss of blood,
And much afraid, I fast away did hie
To seek the hermit in the little wood.

And in the wood I heard the Vesper bell
That silver-sounding, tinkled through the air,
Calling on all the weary folk to kneel,
And tell to God the tale of that day's care.

Then I all faint and weakened by my wound,
Hearing that bell did feel most strangely sad ;
And surely there was magic in the sound,
For it did bring the deeds that were so bad

Which I have done to many an helpless soul,
Across the sight of my mind's inward eye :
I tried to think they had not been so foul,
And yet the horrid truth might not pass by.

My heart was bursting with the ugly thought
Of all my sinning, that was black as Hell ;—
“ Oh turn, redeem the error thou hast wrought ! ”
Rang out the sweet-voiced little vesper bell.

And lo ! there came a feeling as of tears,
Across the aching of my heart that stole ;
And I,—all burdened with the sins of years—
Cried up to Christ, from out my bitter soul.

Cried up to Christ, and told Him all my sin,
Cried up in fierce repentant words and wild,
And prayed that I a new life might begin,
An earnest man, and yet at heart a child.

For something out of heaven brake the bands
That bound my heart, as knelt I on the sod,
And heavenly tears rained down on blood-stained
hands

And made my high heart kneel before its God.

Now any man who longeth after Light,
Let him but cry one true repentant word,
Put out one feeble hand toward the Right,
And be he worst, yet shall his cry be heard.

For the first sigh that leaves the burdened breast
Over a life of godlessness and wrong,
Is held by our dear Christ to be more blest
Than all the music of an angel's song.

ELSA.

 SOUL in Heaven looked down to Earth,
 And sighed, " So long have I waited here !
 Hast forgot me, Elsa, amidst the mirth
 And joy and strife
 Of an earthly life ?
 There is no Heaven without thee, dear !
 Elsa, Elsa ! "

The mother looked from the cottage door,
 And gazed with fear down the long dark lane :
 " Hast lost thyself, daughter, upon the moor ?
 My old heart fears,
 For no star peers
 Through the night that is raving in wind and rain.
 Elsa ! Elsa ! "

The sad old eyes will gaze in vain
 For many an hour of night and day
 Till they dim with a weight of age and pain.

For the old heart aches,—
But the young heart breaks,
And is fain to go home on that other way !
Elsa ! Elsa !



THE DEATH OF THE KNIGHT.

HE priest prayed loud by the bed-side,
Though the sick man heeded him not ;
While the doctor smoothed the pillow,
And cooled the head that was hot.

And all around stood the servants,
Close-pressing to see the sight ;
To see what the man would look like
Who must die, in that very night.

He lay and laughed in their faces,
Nor would own to the ghastly pain
And cried wild words, for the fever
Was high in the sick man's brain.

“Leave me alone, Sir doctor,
For thine own sake vex me no more,
For not with old woman's physic
Will I lengthen my life one hour !

You worry me, priest, with your Latin,
And as for the folk on high,
I believe that they understand it
No better than you or I !

For neither by prayer nor physic
Can I ever again be whole,
For wine and women and warfare
Have ruined me, body and soul !

Though I cannot die in battle,
As a soldier should love to do,
In spite of the priests and doctors,
I'll die like a man, I vow !

Ho ! fetch me my knightly armour,
That as I have lived I may die,
And I'll strive, tho' the breath be my latest,
To shout my old battle-cry !”

So they huddled him into his armour,
And he lay in that grim mock state ;
But the weak old hands in the gauntlets
Could not lift their own poor weight.

So he lay and rambled in talking
Of deeds he had done of old
And love and fighting, and drinking
Were the themes of the tales he told.

And ever anon delirious
He moaned in his mortal pain,
And cried wild words, for the fever
Was high in the sick man's brain.

“ Mother of God ! this is awful ! ”
Cried the pale-faced, trembling priest :
“ Is there nought we can do to save him,
Or to soften his heart at least ?

“ He cannot live for much longer,
But he must not die in this state,
Or Saint Peter and all the angels
Will thrust him back from the Gate ! ”

As he spoke, the door came open,
And the sun broke in on the gloom ;
And with the air and the sunshine
A child came into the room.

She was but a poor little slave-child,
And yet she was strangely fair,
Who had wandered into the chamber,
Not knowing that death was there.

He saw the fair little maiden :
The watchers noticed a change
Pass over his high harsh features,
While his eyes grew saddened and strange.

And he spoke with his gaze upon her
In a voice that was no more wild
But troubled, and sorely regretful,
“ My God ! I forgot the child !

I must then have long been dreaming,
For I thought that ten years ago
I laid you beside your mother
In a grave that was hid in snow ;

And I thought that a long mound lay
By a mound that was very small,
And that there I buried my heart :
But 'twas but a dream after all !”

(For so he spoke, in his madness
Of his little dead child and wife,
And thought that this child was his darling
He once loved better than life.)

The wondering child came nearer,
And the priest raised her up to him,
She kissed the lips that were dying,
Till his eyes with the tears grew dim.

And he said, “ God bless the maiden,
In her womanhood by-and-by ; ”
And he groaned, “ God save the maiden
From such men in the world as I !

If I could but live and protect her !—
Quick ! doctor, and bring me your stuff !
If you save my life, I'll promise
That you shall have gold enough

To build a palace !—Now, saintling,
Quick ! chatter your saintliest prayers,
And to your chapel I promise
A ——" frightened, the little one stares

To see the grey head fall forward,
And they lift her down from the bed,
And quietly draw the curtain,
For the grim old spirit has fled.

Alone in the gloomy chamber
Lay the unloved body there ;
For soon they left him, each hast'ning
To be first to bow to his heir.



"TO HIS DEAD MISTRESS."

ET me just think my thoughts a little
space,
Once let me kiss that young, pathetic
face,
That, doubly armed, I from your presence pass
To meet the world ; and by *my* life to prove
Your life was not in vain, oh, dear dead love.

If there be aught of any worth in me,
I owe it to your trustful sympathy
For you believed in me, so made me strive
To live that life you thought I used to live.
Oh, your fine faith in me was like a hand
Flower seeking, in a waste and barren land :
For when you wept, beneath that gracious rain
And the sweet sunning of your tender smile,
My heart that had lain winter-bound awhile
Put forth the leaves of love and life again.

Now that you've left me, bitter thoughts, alas !
Rise and reproach me with the man I was
Ere that you came, and brake my iron bands,

And said those things, that like fine fairy hands
Pass'd o'er my heart-strings untouched through long
years

Until they thrilled and trembled into tears.

And oft when my old grief awoke in me,
You made your music speak your sympathy,
And wrapped my soul within a dainty dream
With notes that touched about an under-theme
Like pearls strung loosely on a golden thread,
Or dew-drops, diamonding a gossamer ;
Then, when the music made a wind-like stir
And rose sweet-passionate, with wings wide-spread,
And *cried* that pathos, *glimm'ring* through the whole,
I knew it for the life-blood of your soul
That flooded all the tender veins of sound,
That wept for me, and sought to heal my wound.

* * * * *

I may not die as yet ; nor will I shirk
The life that lies before, of care and work.
You were an angel always, I, the chief
Of sinners ; you are lying there at rest
With fair hands folded saintly on your breast ;
Your dead lips saying, " Love, cast off thy grief,"
And as I press them soft and silently,
I make a life-long vow, dear love, to be
That better Self, that you awoke in me.

A THOUGHT IN WINTER.

(WRITTEN TO MY FATHER, CHRISTMAS, 1884)



HE snow lies where there once were summer flowers,
There shines no sun to glad these winter hours ;

But though the beauty of the world hath fled,
'Tis only sleeping for a while, not dead.
For the bosom of the mighty Earth is rife
With the power of a throbbing under-life,
Which at the summons of the spring-tide showers
Will upward push, and pierce and spring to flowers.
All patiently we bear the wind, the rain,
Knowing our tender flowers will bloom again.

This is a truth by silent Nature taught,
With which the sunrise, flowers, all things are fraught.

For since the world of herbs and beasts began
To bear on it the thinking creature, Man,
Hope has lain nestling in the human heart

To rise with grief, and play a healing part.
Thus year by year, the loved of every land
Are beckoned by that pitiless dim hand
That draws them helpless, very far away,
Where infinite white Silence holds her sway,
And there they sleep ; what's after none may know,
But all can hope ; though stricken in his woe,
If man will list to Nature, Hope is there—
Is in the sunrise, in the spring-tide air,
Is crying silently, yet everywhere,
“ Hope on, a little while, poor child of pain,
Thy long-lost flowers shall live for thee again.”



“NIOBE.”



ET all the world come learn of me
The stony, silent “Niobe” ;
For though I have no power of speech,
Yet the great lesson I would teach
Is here in stone, and stands sublime
In grief, a warning for all time.
Oh, for *one* moment, look and wait,
And learn ere that it be too late !

I cast my pride against the face
Of the all-powerful gods ;—alas !
The poor proud mother that I was !
The gods in silent anger burned,
And over-night my fate they turned,
And came and smote with blasting breath
All these my darlings unto death ;
And left me with my heart a-break,
With dreadful tears upon my cheek.

In golden Athens there was one
Who wrought great beauties out of stone.
He loved his beauteous country well,
And just before great Athens fell,
When all that once was high and fair
Was sinking, fading,—in despair ;
He, of his grief, created me
And gave the name of Niobe.
Though, while his heart in silence bled,
“This is poor stricken Greece,” he said,
“These are her children, falling, dead !”

Come, all ; though far as South from North
The lesson that I shadow forth
A thousand travelling miles is worth :
I stand so patiently,—a sign,
And yearn to save you, children mine !
Oh, Nations hear !—and mark ye well
What once I was, and how I fell !



A SONG OF SPRING.

T is the time of all things gay and green,
A-down the sun-rays slips a showeret
clear,

And twigs and stalks and most bare things are seen
To bud beneath the young sun o' the year.

And on the hill a light wind is at play,
Kissing the young-eyed daisies here and there ;
And far above the dear Earth in her May
A raptured bird thrills the ecstatic air.





ETERNAL STRIFE.



AM called Darkness ; through all time I
strive
With Light ; my murky reign is short, for
his
Encroacheth on the first and latter hour
Of it,—so if I loathe the Light 'tis not
A thing for wonder !

In the little space
Of four-and-twenty hours, I wrestle twice
With this great power beloved of all the world ;
And aft a little space I shroud his face,
But all too soon he rises masterful.
This war we waged since Chaos moved in twain,
And so must do, for ever and for ever.
Unto all peoples we have been a trope
Of good and bad, of God and Devildom,
And countless names are given unto us
By different tongues : a little matter, that,
For our great struggle is the only source

Of man's untutored guessings, wonder-bred
That grow to myth, and crystallize in creed.
Eternally, am I the one condemned
To bear the names of Typhon, Ahriman,
Satan, and more of import vile as these.
Then where's the cause for marvel if I crave
To overthrow my foe, so that he rise
No more, to bless the waiting eyes of men ?
Then might I wrap for ever in my shroud
The puny things that loved and worshipped him
And hated me !—This have I striven to do
Aeon on aeon, age fast following age,
And this the way I try it ;—

When the flowers

Out-wearied with the glare and heat of day
Put up their petals prayer-wise, for the cool
And hush of night, forth from the depth I creep
Vastly up the dome, until I meet
The eye of day, the Light, and him forthwith
Almighty I face, not caring now
How he may glow and stare ; his doom is come.
And so I lay the burden of my weight
On the broad shoulders of the setting sun,
And down the dome I slowly thrust him forth
And leave him in the depths unknown of men.
Him, safe in thrall, I can begin my reign
(Nathless the clouds are still hot-flushed with him,
Which soon I chill,) and all the world is mine !
Nought care I for the moon and stars,—pale things

.Light, and yet powerless to thwart my power
For often I contrive to draw a vast
Cloud-curtain right across their staring eycs,
And so begin my revel unespied.—
Behold my worshippers ! A merry train
That creep from holes and nooks, the bat-like things
That hide by day.—See there the shade-like Dream
With streaming hair, and loud and ghastly laugh
And eyes unholy that have gazed on Hell !
Haste, hurry on, sweep on, the hours are few.
Go, fright the children, haunt the sick at heart,
And point the way to madness !—All is well,
Fear not, oh trembling Murder, I will shroud
The thing thou bearest in thy stained right hand.
Go on, the knife is sharp and I am here—
Go on !

Hail ! Lust, and work thine horrid will,
No man may see thee and I tell no tale !—
—Ah ! shivering suicide, truly thou art wise
To choose this time, for see how inky black
My mantle, and how deep the river runs !
On, on, one leap,—and then thy hopeless eyes
Will close for ever on this useless world.
Get on, the crowd of you, and do your work
Stealthily silent, swift as all sin should ;
And make the dark air thicker and more thick
With the incense of your hideous sacrifice,
The silent smoke of your iniquities,
That it may rise and stifle the pure stars

And make the moon reel sickened in their midst !
 Do that I bid ye, Shades, and Deathly Sins,
 And hurry, hurry, hurry, lest the Light
 Ye love not, find ye out !

Now do I wield
 The mighty sceptre that I love so well,
 Now reign indeed,—now am I—

Hark, oh hark !

What noise is that ?— It is the mighty bell
 Clanging the hour that brings me banishment
 With such harsh sounding, that my whole heart
 shakes

And startled silence, like a nested bird,
 Flutters afar, waiting until it cease
 To settle cloudlike, in her accustomed haunt.
 Alas ! the hours have slidden silently
 Into the Past, and now th' unwelcome time
 Draws nigh, when I must slink from off my throne
 And leave it to my rival ; so, dethroned
 I, though a King, must wander for a while
 And lurk in dens and caves, as beggars do,
 In vain I clutch my sceptre, black gives place
 To grey, for I am paling fast,—yet cling
 Half desperate to my quickly waning power
 Until, oh Shame ! a thin white mist I lie
 Upon the ground, and then I know my doom
 Is sealed ; for lo ! a sound is in the air
 A bird has twittered ; oh, I know his song
 (Oh, hated sound, oh, hated, hated, sound !)

He sang it when the first great Light was born
And Time was yet in puny infancy ;
Then one by one the sleeping birds awake,
And rouse the flowers for that they sing so loud
Their triumph song, “The King, the King, will
come !”

And Herald Breeze comes laden with the tale
To wake the Court of Nature, that the whole
Shall bow before and greet the King that comes.

I faint, but clinging yet, lie low amid
The myriad murmurs of a waking world.

“The King, the King is coming !” ah, too well
I know the words for truth ; beaten again,
And so, alas ! for ever and for ever !—
The King is mounting to his throne, his foot
Is nigh the summit of the hill, and I
Must once more see his triumph, and then fade
To nothingness, crushed, baffled :—’Tis the same,
The same cruel triumph of unnumbered aeons.

For see, at last the god-like morn stands high
On yonder hill : I meet my master’s eye,
And then dissolve in tears upon the grass.

Tears of defeat, for lo ! I am no more,
Save as a thought within the minds of men
Of something loveless, that of late has been,
An enemy that yet must come again
When a few sunlit hours have winged their flight,
To steal the crown from off the brow of day.

FATE AND THE MONARCH.

 OT this, not this, but these !” I cried,
In my despot pride ;
“ Tell me, how shall this thing be so
If I, the king of the land, say ‘ No ! ’
Rather I’d give my kingdom’s treasure
Than this small thing, that I love ’yond measure ! ”
(So I cried, as the shade came creeping.)

“ Not these, not these, but this ! ” cried Fate,
And passed my gate ;
Left me my treasures,—the courtier crowd
That stifled me with its flattery loud,
Left me my crushing jewelled crown,
Left all these things, yet left me alone,
For she swept me by and becked on Death,
With its blasting breath ;
And sought and found the poor pale thing
I loved, I loved !—then with wide-spread wing,
Left me, the great king, weeping.



A SUMMER NIGHT.

HE garden is silent and stilly
'Neath the languorous night at its noon,
And a raptured and tremulous lily
Is breathing its scent to the moon.

And poppy, the silver-leaved sleeper,
Is silently thrilling with bliss,
And the blush of her petals burns deeper
At the dew-drop's most delicate kiss.

On the deep-breathing breast of the river
The lilies all languidly lie,
And ever they dreamily shiver
As the ghost of a breeze goeth by.

The rose drooping low in her beauty,
Is white as the mantle of Death,
And the breeze to her charms doeth duty,
And draws in his worshipping breath.

'Mid the scent of its own heavy blossom
The tree doth deliciously dream,
Soft-shedding its flowers on the bosom
Of the lazily murmuring stream.

- The stars a sweet music are making,
But their voices are veiled in the height,
And only a heart-throb is breaking
The passionate hush of the night.



A YOUNG POET.



HILES yet in youthful insolence I dreamed
With spring-tide vigour in my brain and
blood,

I dared to hope, to stand where they have stood
Who sun-like, high, have universal beamed ;
And saw far-off the day when all men should
Own me as one of that giant brotherhood,
Or even greater !—'Lack that so it seemed !
For still, high, holy, there the mountains are
Up by the Thunder-home and mystic Star
With cloud-veiled brows ;—and I am at their feet
Plucking the valley-flowers, as is meet
For one that was so hoping and so young,
Who knew it not, but could not play the part
Of the great dead ;—oh, hush, poor poet-heart,
Or thou wilt break, ere half thy songs be sung !

HEALED BY MUSIC.



LOOK on a night that's mad in wind and
rain
From eyes and heart half blind and dumb
with pain :—

Will never the day, and the hope of youth, and the
good of it, come again ?

Oh, heavy life, that I must live thee thorough !
Could I but lay thee sleeping, thou and sorrow,
Until the breaking of the final morrow.

* * * *

Hush ! there is music.

“ Grieve no more, grieve no more
Drink of this Lethe stream,
Close thy tired eyes and dream,
Over-worn soul !

Hush for awhile, for Music is awake,
Her mist-like robing trails along the night ;
Put by thought-darkness, and for thine own sake

Catch by the garment of this unseen Light,
 And in it, fold on fold, do thou enwrap thee,
 And let the great all-healing mother, lap thee ;
 To whom sick Failure raises eyes from earth
 And traces hope in her ; and foolish Mirth
 A-toying with her flowers, for one short while
 Lists to her, saddening, and forgets to smile.
 Sin loathes itself, and weeps, when Music sings,
 Music, whose vasty quivering spirit-wings
 Brush off the dust of life, and from the sod
 Sweeping aside the earth-cloud, thick and foul,
 Wake the Divine within the world-cramped soul
 And bear it up to boundlessness, and God !”

* * * *

Now is it over, and the sounds have flown
 Where stars and birds alone could trace their flight,
 But in my heart they leave a gracious token ;

The chain is broken

That bound me down with sorrow’s selfish might,
 And I and young-eyed Hope are all alone ;
 Eased is my heart of doubts, and carking fears
 Eased are my burning eyes, for lo ! I prayed
 Whiles yet the blessed Music with me stayed,
 God heard and sent a rain of quiet tears.



THE KINGDOM OF THE CHILD.



HIS happy thing, this tiny one,
Too young to know what wealth is his,
Doth a most mighty kingdom own,
And mother-love that kingdom is.

Across his childhood's golden day
There stealeth ne'er a little cloud
But it is quickly sunned away
By the kind eyes of motherhood.

But one I know, a little child
(And 'tis a very piteous thing,)
For though so dear and undefiled,
The babe is but a crownless king !

He striveth by their names to call
The faces that he oft hath seen,
Yet one name saith he not at all,
Nor can he guess what it may mean,

For, from a mother's tender smile,
A piteous exile he !—alas,
Her hands are folded for a while
Beneath the daisies in the grass.

But still the mother-heart doth beat
In watchful love the stars behind ;
So bide awhile, then go, my sweet,
Thy kingdom in God's own to find.



THE LOYAL LADY.

I.



N royal wrath the King is forth
To meet the traitor, who far up north
Has risen in force with a savage band
Who ravage the country far and wide ;
And the King has called on his loyal and true,
Bidding them strive, whate'er betide,
To do the greatest that man may do,
With wile of brain and with strength of hand
To hurl the rebels out of the land.

The lady's heart with fear is cold,
She has three young sons who are strong and bold,
And one little maid with a golden head.
Full well she knoweth, the brave young three
Will be mad to follow their warrior-King
Forth to the field where the fight will be
To do such deeds as the jongleurs sing.
“ Only my little maid May,” she said,
Will be left to me when my boys be dead.

Away ye tears that stain my face,
Selfish is love that would bring disgrace ;
In the unknown future is hid the thing
That shall bring them glory, or bring them Death.
And I would to God, that I now might learn
Whether the shroud or victor-wreath
Will be the meed that their valour earn,—
But weep I will not,—but rather sing
Full glad to obey the call of my King.

Then up the turret's winding stair
One came bounding, and entered there ;
With shining eyes and with heart aglow,
The eldest, the strongest of all the three,
Passionate pleads from his hot young heart
To join the fighting. One kiss gives she,
Smiles straight in his eyes as she bids him part ;
Bravely and cheerfully watches him go
To likely death from a dangerous foe.

The darkness fell, nor came the knight.
“ Oh, mother, mother, I fear the fight
Goes 'gainst the King, so I needs must go
To seek my brother and learn the truth ! ”
So spake the second with eager breath.
With her brave bright smile she kissed the youth,
And bade him go forth to fame or death,
And stifled the tears that were fain to flow
At thought of that fair head lying low.

The stars gazed coldly on her bower,
And found her watching at midnight's hour.
Then came the youngest, and hotly cried,
“ Oh, lady mother, I must begone !
The King's cause loses, my brothers both stay ;
I cannot rest till the truth be known !”
She pressed him to heart, then turned away :
“ Oh, dearer than all in this old world wide,
Oh, God, that no evil thing betide !

“ If all the mothers in the land
Obeyed as fully the royal command,
Our cause should prosper ; for one by one
I sent my strongest, fairest, and best,
Sent them away, with the smile on my face
While my heart was breaking in my breast ;
But Kingship's due and the pride of race
Shall dry my tears and shall hush my moan
If I and my May be left alone.

“ If my three boys come not again,
If all my pleading of prayer be vain ;
If never I clasp them alive and fair
Who lay as babes on this loving breast,
Nor sun myself in their glad young eyes.
If never these weak old hands may rest
On the youthful strength that I fondly prize,
'Twill be a burden of great despair,
Full bitter, full heavy, for me to bear.

And yet, the blame I cast on none ;
To serve their lord are my heroes gone :
If they fall I will bow me and whisper low,
“ This is the will of God and the King ! ”
If ever May, child-like, should murmur in grief
“ Hush ! ” I will say to the fond young thing,
“ Their death won glory, tho’ life was brief ;
Their bodies were slain by their liege-lord’s foe,
But the souls of the loyal to God shall go ! ”

So when they sadly brought them home,
In terrible quiet she watched them come ;
Her eldest, so hopeful at break of day,
Was silent only for lack of breath,
On whose cold brow that she proudly had kissed
The red mark lay of the hand of Death.
’Twixt the dead and live face there rose a mist,
But never a word they heard her say
As she turned and gazed where the second lay.

Oh, face death-white, oh, wound blood-red
Where out of his side his rash life fled ;
She tenderly kissed each wounded limb,
Then turned the cloth from the youngest’s face,
Murmuring “ Bravest ! in years but a child
A man for courage, a girl for grace ! ”
And she stooped to look ;—but her gaze was wild
And sickening she shivered with eyes grown dim,
For the beauty is battered out of him.

II.

What stirs the dust on yonder road
That in the sunlight lies white and broad?
It is the King with his brilliant train,
Who is coming to thank in his graceful way
The lady the mother, who brave and loyal
Hath lost so much on that hard-won day,
Hath done so much for the good cause royal,
And hath borne so meekly her silent pain,
Or her three heroes so cruelly slain.

“ Ah, small indeed the thanks I need,
Since for thee, oh sire, did my dear ones bleed,
And if further within my power it lay
To please thee, to serve thee,—glad were I
To answer thy bidding ! ” The King looked round
With quick-flushed cheek and an eager eye,
Half was he smiling, and half he frowned
As there, where the flowers in the field were gay
He spied the form of the maiden May.

The King is young, is flushed with wine,
And bold in the thought of right divine,
Said he, “ By the words thou hast but now said
When thou off'redst service with all thy heart

If it lay within range of thy womanly power,
I claim thy dearest !—Nay, do not start ;
For by Heaven I love yon virgin flower
Who in queenly satin should be arrayed.
I claim thy daughter, yon lovely maid !”

The red blood dyed her white worn cheek,
For very wonder she scarce can speak ;
“ Oh sire, how foolish my tongue hath been
That said such words ! Oh, for pity’s sake
Forget that I spake them, and think on the shame
If thou to thy Court my maiden take
With her child-like ways and her humble name ;
For though sweet as sweetest the earth hath seen,
The child is too simple to be a Queen !”

He bit his lips, then laughing low
“ Nay, nay good lady, I meant not so ;
Many most beautiful dames there are
And none of them Queens, whom I love full well,
Who flirt their butterfly wings at my Court
And in the light of my loving dwell !
For I count it my right and my royal sport
To seek the maids who are young and fair,
That each for a while my favour share !”

Then pale as death, with painful breath
From the quick fierce beat of the heart beneath,

With eyes of terror and deep distrust
She looked at him, cried to him as he stood,
“ Oh fallen, oh fallen from kinghood’s height !
False to the purity of thy blood !
At last can I read thy words aright ;
As the manhood of men of lower dust
So stained is thy kinghood with brutal lust !

“ Oh go,—for ever leave this place,
Nor wreck its peace with such deep disgrace,
As thy trust’s in Christ to be saved and shriven !
Loyal to thy name have I ever been,
But look you, I think I could hate the king
(Not king, not king, but a man unclean)
Who found in his heart to do this thing !
Nay, I could curse the God in Heaven
If this, my dearest, to sin were given !”

The King threw back his haughty head
With eye of lightning, and cheek flame-red ;
“ Wouldst preach to thy Sovereign ? Oh, simple
dame,
Thou art not versed in our Court-ways fine ;
Else were I vex’d with the words thou hast cried !
I am a man (though my right is divine),
Have human needs that must be supplied.
So get me the girl, lest royal blame
Shall blight thy life with its lasting shame !”

Then slowly went she up the stair ;
How wan her face, and how white her hair !
She called the child from her flowers away,
Saying, “ Come, speak with me, birdie mine ;—
Fifteen fair years of thy lifetime have sped.
The winters have left their snow-drift fine,
And the summers have left their roses red
In thy winsome face ;—thou hast found life gay
And wouldest wish to live for many a day ? ”

“ How strange thy question, mother dear,
There’s that in thine eyes doth make me fear !
In sooth I am gay, and could wish to live
While flowers have scent, and the birds still sing ! ”
“ But tell me, but tell me, my dearest, my love,
Couldst give thy life for thy country’s King,
As thy brothers, who walk with God above ? ”
“ In that cause, mother, I well believe,
'Twere sweet, 'twere easy my life to give ! ”

“ Then, child, whose heart is pure as day,
For thine old mother kneel down and pray ;
Tell God thy mother will do the thing
That will turn the heart to a stone in her breast,
And pray the Angels to witness true
That I did the thing for it seemed the best.
Oh plead for pardon if wrong I do !—
—How close to my side the child doth cling ;
Have I made thee weep, whom God made to sing ? ”

She strove to smile through her deathly pain.
But ever the tears ran down again ;
She turns from the face of the weeping child,
Wearily bidding her “kneel and pray,
And cover thine eyes with their terrible stare
Of fear ; dost thou dread thy mother, May ?
Oh pray, child, pray !” So she sobbed a prayer,
Helpless, and frightened, and undefiled
To Mary the Mother, the Virgin mild.

Close by her side the mother stood ;
Her heart is weeping great tears of blood,
She watched the maid, who doth piteous pray,
A moment that agony turns to years.
Then swift to her bosom she snatches the child,
Wetting her hair with a rain of tears,
Burning her brow with her kisses wild !—
—Then stabbed to her heart the maiden lay,
No king can injure the little maid May.

III.

She leads him to the shaded room
Where pure as a star on midnight gloom
There shines the Death-fair face of the child.
Silent, she watches him gaze and start,
Then thrust forth a hand as he eagerly stands
To feel for faintest beat of the heart :

He cannot touch it ; her folded hands
Lie over her breast like a silver shield,
Still holding the daisies plucked in the field.

Then she, “ I think ’twere well, my King,
That thou, the memory of this thing,
Should bear, whatever the date or clime ;
Perchance it may check thy strong young blood
To sometimes think what a mother hath done
For a cause she counted true and good,
To keep the King on his rightful throne ;
What a mother gave in a far back time
To save the King from a damning crime !

“ There—have I hurt thee ? While I speak
I see the pallor upon thy cheek ;
Thou turnst thy head ; doth it make thee wince,
This old, old woman, this dead young face ?
Then pardon, my liege, for the words I have said,
I am old and sad ; I crave thy grace,
And I pray thee leave me, me and my dead ;
For I can but mind, not that thou art my prince,
But that I was a mother a short while since ! ”

As one that dreams he left the corse,
And left the castle and got to horse ;
And groaning, he spurred till the castle lay
In the distance hidden ; most sore distrest
The palace he reached, and in siren-white arms

With tired head soft on a siren-breast,
His new-born conscience was lulled to rest,
And drowned in the wine of those madd'ning charms !
—But the childless old woman, those miles away,
Craves God for his pardon by night and day.



THE OPEN LISTS.



E cannot be the men that used to be !
The old romance has died so utterly
Its right and natural death !” ’Tis thus
you say,

The brothers and the husbands of to-day.
“ Where is the dragon, whom the errant knight
Went forth to meet alone, in fearful fight ?
And where the maiden, fairest far of all,
Who wept and wasted in that brutal thrall ?

“ We live not now in cloudland, but on earth,
Content if after work we can have mirth ;
And if we like to jest with you and flirt,
Why need you think you spy the trail of dirt ?
As for those legends, Science at her prime
Has driven out those dreams of olden time ;
Has swept away for ever the false mist,
And now we know such things do not exist !”

Oh men ! Romance is not yet dead, indeed
Though these things *be* the best you think you need !
Were you not blinded with your pleasant sin,
Could you but know that you are of a kin
With God (but that your lower self, the brute,
Is hushing ever, and will soon make mute
The soul ; a germ which were it brought to light
Of possibilities, quite infinite !—)
Could you but know and feel this truth, I say
Soon would you see, that here, in our own day,
A viler snake is growing evermore
Than ever fancy showed in tales of yore,
That in our midst a fairer maid is bound
In faster thrall, than in such tales is found !

Your Science, with her lip superior curled,
Calls such, “the nursery songs, an infant world
Once loved ; but which its manhood’s reason-
strength
Casts off, and knows the thing for myth at length !”
True ! ’twas a trope, a symbol, in good sooth,
But then, it symbolized an utter truth,
For still the dragon rears its horrid head !
’Tis not that opportunity has fled,
But, sirs, it is your chivalry that’s dead !

There is a maiden who was once to see
As bright as day ; her name is Purity.
Alas ! that one so saintly fair and fine

In loathly thrall should long be left to pine !
Wrapped, stifled in the Dragon-coils of Lust,
While Chivalry lies dying in the dust,
She looks for some kind help from manhood's grace
While useless tears besmirch her angel-face,
And, all the while, you pleasure-loving men,
Shut her the surer in that noisome den,
Each sin of yours is as another chain
That binds her dear and tender limbs again !

Open your eyes, oh brothers, look and see,
A chance lies here for truer chivalry
Than that of joust and old-time tournament ;
With heart on high and knightly deeds intent
In strong young-manhood's utmost strength, oh sirs,
Go forth to win the golden knightly spurs ;
Wake ! all of you, and brace your heart and hand,
The greatest and the least of all the land,
The simple fool, the pauper and the king,
The sage !—oh, wake, and forth to gain the thing !
For 'tis not as of old ; the priceless prize
Is not for strongest, fairest, or most wise,
For, strange to say, that prize doth ofttimes fit
The one of feeble strength and little wit !
Then list awhile, while I those deeds recite
Which make of any man a gentle knight.

He must not fear to tread the pathway, trod
By all the lonely hero-hearts of God ;

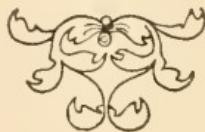
He stands alone, though in the common crowd,
Heroic-meek before its mocking loud,
Yet shuns it not, but ever more is fain
To better it ; he looks from out the pain
Of human wants unsatisfied,—the jeers
Of wanton mirth, and through his silent tears
With sad, brave eyes turned God-ward, prayeth he
That faithful to his Lady, he may be !

The name of womanhood to him is dear,
A shrine to bow before, to trust, revere ;
And by his simple faith's most tender grace
Unwittingly, he points its rightful place,
For by his courtesy, the very worst
Wakes to a knowledge of her sin accurst ;
And she that careless was, nor bad nor good,
Thus learns the power of worthy womanhood.
Where'er he pass, there higher thoughts will be,
If he be true to Lady Purity.

And such a one on the Last Day shall stand
Holding before him, high in his right hand,
His worn right hand,—his selfless, chast'ning sword
That ever 'gainst his lower self hath warred ;
That through the quivering flesh its keen point ran
And touched the hidden Godhood of the man,
That woke the hero-heart within his breast,
And nerved his arm for fight, nor let it rest

Despite the self-love and the fleshly pain,
Until the brute beneath his foot lay slain.

Ay, such a one as this shall surely rise,
Nor fear when God shall look into his eyes,
And through the eyes on to his pure heart's worth ;
Then while adown the steep fades little Earth
As 'fore the sunrise melts the dreaming mist,
In a great flood of glory high uprist
The King from out his hand shall take his sword,
And through the hush of mighty Cherubim
That throng to welcome, there shall ring the word
Of Deity, that bids him "Rise aright :
Eternally of Christ's great Order, Knight!"



MORNING.

HEN see, my rose I open unto thee
That all-impatient tappeth on the pane
To call me forth, who dreaming long have
lain

To look upon the world that waits for me ;
Where 'neath the sun-smile, on the lawn there be
A myriad morning-stars, full tenderly
Held in the tear-drops of a midnight rain.

Through wide-thrown lattice floods the morning air
Whose breath is laden with the scent of flowers
It hath caressed and wakened some three hours ;
It slippeth cooling fingers through my hair
While wafting to mine ear the rapture rare
Of the glad lark, that down the sunrise stair
Sheddeth on Silence notes in silver showers.

Oh, have I guessed it, why he sings so loud ?
It seems to me, one of the Cherubim
Hath told a golden secret unto him :

Hath taken him behind the veil of cloud
Where bide the freed of Earth, a spirit-crowd,
Whom we can only see within the shroud
Because our eyes with human tears are dim.

Oh, heart of mine, too long thou sleep'st in night !
Awake, and open to God's world thy door,
The golden day, the life lies all before.
Go forth for God !—First set thy wrong life right,
Then face the “ prince of this world,” in his might ;
Give thy whole strength to spread the dawning Light
Till, o'er the World-King's grave, God's Kingdom
bright
Cometh one day, to stand for evermore !



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